

Message Text

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65

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 SAJ-01 /065 W

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R 221558Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5292

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1107

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, AL

SUBJ: ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: PARIS 01549

1. DURING A RECENT CALL ON OTHER MATTERS, MFA'S BALKAN PENINSULA DIRECTOR (FRANCHETTI) VOLUNTEERED TO EMBOFF A FEW TIDBITS ON ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENTS DRAWN FROM THE ITALIAN EMBASSY'S REPORTING FROM TIRANA. INFORMATION TENDS TO COMPLEMENT THAT PROVIDED BY THE FRENCH (REFTEL) AND OBVIOUSLY REFLECTS CLOSE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AMONG THE SMALL NUMBER OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN TIRANA.

2. THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR HAS REPORTED A FLURRY OF MILITARY CONSTRUCTION IN AND AROUND TIRANA. THE MOST SURPRISING THING FOR HIM IS THAT THE ALBANIANS, WHO ARE NORMALLY EXTREMELY SECRETIVE, ARE MAKING NO ATTEMPT TO CAMOUFLAGE THESE ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE TAKING PLACE AT DIVERSE MILITARY SITES AND IN A FRENZIED MANNER. IN THE SAME CONNECTION, THE AMBASSADOR ALSO NOTES AN ALBANIAN PREOCCUPATION TO BUILD BOMB SHELTERS AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT BUNKERS.

3. SPECULATING ON THE REASONS FOR THE ABOVE-MENTIONED
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ACTIVITIES, THE AMBASSADOR HAS CONCLUDED THAT IT IS PROBABLY

RELATED TO INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO A POSSIBLE
BEHIND-THE-SCENES STRUGGLE TO SUCCEED PARTY CHIEF HOXHA.
ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR, REPORTS IN TIRANA INDICATE THAT
HOXHA'S HEALTH IS DETERIORATING, AND THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING
THAT HE WILL NOT BE AROUND MUCH LONGER.

4. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, FRANCHETTI SAID THE ITALIAN
AMBASSADOR HAS REPORTED NOTHING TO INDICATE THAT THE SOVIETS
HAVE BEEN MAKING ANY ATTEMPT IN RECENT MONTHS TO WOO THE
ALBANIANS. FINALLY, THE AMBASSADOR HAS INDICATED THAT THE
FIGHT AGAINST THE BUREAUCRATS IS CONTINUING.VOLPE

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